



MISS RAHIMA GRIFFITHS

[An article from her describing the reasons for accepting Islam as her religion as also the persecution to which she is being subjected appears elsewhere. Our friends will realize how difficult it is to declare Islam even in this so-called tollerant free country. We request our friends to pray to Allah to give her perseverance.—Ed. I. R.]

بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ
نُصَلِّي عَلَى رَسُولِ الْكَرِيمِ

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WHY I AM A MUSLIM ?

Until a few months ago I was regarded as a Christian, having been born into a Christian family some 26 years ago, and having endeavoured to live a good life based on the principles taught me from childhood.

Since I have been an adult, Good Fortune has not been exactly my friend, and I have sought a tangible "something" which Christianity did not afford me; consequently, I became a "drifter." I went to Church mainly because the work in which I was engaged demanded it, but spiritual help and uplift were lacking.

Some years ago—1926-27—I was in Egypt, and as an ordinary sight-seeing tourist visited the famous Mosque of Muhammad Ali in Cairo. I had the privilege of being present during prayers, and was immediately impressed by the true reverence of rich and poor alike, and by how much their "Allah" and prayer meant to them, and many times since have marvelled over it.

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It is a long jump to 1933, but this year I found myself in Woking, and once again as an interested sight-seer visited the Mosque—again during prayers. These were followed by a lecture based on the first chapter of the Holy Qur-án, the prayer of every Muslim, and, indeed, a prayer for any man of any creed. I learnt of this world-wide brotherhood, possessing no racial or class distinctions; of the “Oneness” of God; of the respect and reverence ascribed to all the former prophets of God, and of the true meaning of Islam—PEACE. It sounded wonderful, and I yearned to know more of this faith, which is so practicable and broad-minded. I procured literature, and a copy of the Holy Qur-án from the Mosque, and was considerably helped by the Imam in my search for truth, and I have found it ! Three months ago, I surrendered myself to the Will of Allah, and publicly declared that I was a Muslim.

To me, the Holy Qur-án is a mine of infinite wealth; with such guidance—for every day of one’s life—no one need fear or go astray. Inwardly, and apparently, too, I am told, I am a much happier person than before, though many trials have come to me because of my changed views; in fact, I have had to resign my position in a Church of England institution because of it ! May I give some of the ideas and views of some of the Christian people with whom I work ? The Institution is a Home for Destitute Children—*non-denominational*,—and my position is that of Assistant Matron.

(i) A. is the Secretary of the Homes’ Committee, and when the Committee heard of my changed ideas, I received the following letter from A. :—

DEAR MISS GRIFFITHS,

The House Committee learnt to-day with much regret and surprise that you have recently become interested in Moslemism, and that you are attending services and lectures at the Woking Mosque.

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In view of this fact coming before the Homes' Committee at their next meeting, we wish to know if you are intending definitely to associate yourself with Islam, and I must make it clear that the Committee would consider this a sufficient ground for dismissal as we can obviously not only not have a person professing the Moslem faith on the Staff, but not even one who is making a practice of attending a Mosque.

I can only add that I am extremely sorry to hear that you contemplate giving up your Christianity, and do beg you to think very seriously before you take this irrevocable step.

Yours faithfully,

D. C. T. H.

I replied to this letter saying that I had "taken this irrevocable step," but I had always thought that religion was a purely personal matter; therefore, my changed ideas had not interfered with my work, or in the welfare of the children with whom I worked. I received a reply, which unfortunately I burnt, in which the good lady said that apparently I had not realized the scope of my work when stating that religion was a personal matter, and inferring that it was impossible for me, as a Muslim, to bring up children in the straight and narrow path.

(ii) B. is a member of the afore-mentioned Committee, and a very ardent church-goer. When she heard the news, it was as though a firework had exploded unexpectedly. Her hands were raised in horror and dismay—"Did I realize what I was doing? Had I lost my senses? Islam was a religion made for men by a man, and for coloured men only."

(iii) C. is another member of the Committee who has lived in Bengal for many years. She affirms that Muslims in that district were acknowledged as the "not so-good

type"; they were wonderfully honest, but terrible liars. In all classes, she says, wives are treated as mere chattels; a man reveres his mother, sisters and like relations, but his wife!—he can treat her as he likes, and all because his Qur-án allows him to do these things. (I produced my Holy Qur-án, and read passages from it which gave her statements the lie.)

(iv) D. is a male member of the Committee—a well-read and learned man—retired headmaster of a well-known public school. When asked for his views, he said, "Well, of course, we know that they (the Muslims) just look forward to the hereafter as a time of unlimited sexual enjoyment!!" Could any theory be more ridiculous when naturally physical desires and needs die with the physical body?

(v) E. is the Vicar who was called in to endeavour to reclaim me to the Christian faith. "Did I realize what a terrible thing I had done?" "The matter was enough to make the Foundress of our Home rise from her grave!" "Did I realize I was denying Jesus!" "Certainly not!" said I, "I still revere Jesus, Moses, and all the prophets, but I acknowledge Muhammad as the last of the prophets of God!" "Did I dare to put Jesus on a level with Moses even?" "Yes, Moses gave the Commandments, and had Jesus not been born, if the people followed those Commandments they would not have gone far wrong!" "But Jesus is Divine, He is the Son of God!" I asked for proof, and pointed out how Jesus only refers to himself as the Son of *Man*. The reply was: "Oh! but we *take* it to mean the Son of *God*." This gentleman explained to me that Jesus was divine because of his miraculous birth. I disagreed, not on the birth itself but on the fact of divinity. "Did I ever pray?" "Certainly!" "Who to?" "The One and only God!" "How could I mix with black men?" I mix with coloured people because I

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believe their faith, and that preaches a world-wide brotherhood which is really ordained by God but only practised in Islam.

(vi) F. is my matron who has been a wonderful friend to me, but, however, I have lost her friendship. She tells me I have demeaned myself as low as it is possible, and that she has lost all respect for me. She asked me : “ Don’t you feel highly superior to these coloured men with whom you’re mixing ? ” I thanked God that I had never suffered from a superiority complex. She contends that Islam is a political bait !! That if Indians—why do people think that Islam is confined to India ?—can convert English people to their faith, before long they will be demanding to govern India for themselves. This I definitely refuted. Having read only a very small portion of the Preface to the Holy Qur-án (Muhammad Ali’s translation) she tells me that *sex* is the main theme of the Holy Book, and, though some of the beliefs are sound and good, the word *Islam* is a pretty covering for something very dirty, something which leaves a nasty taste in one’s mouth ! She compares the people who expound this Faith, though clever and subtle, to the legendary spider inviting the innocent little fly into the web. To her, Islam spells the unclean side of sexual matters, and states that I am being blindly led to a life of prostitution which she thinks is wonderfully cloaked by the word “ polygamy.” It is impossible to convince her against any one of her beliefs.

(vii) G. is a Christian friend with a very wrong conception of Islam. I quote a few lines from a recent letter :—

“I feel your step is a very mistaken and truly downward one, for I cannot see what attraction there could be in the Moslem faith ; it is essentially an Eastern religion, and, I should have thought, could have had no appeal to the mind of an educated woman

of the West. It seems to me to be in no wise comparable to the Gospels. The God of Mahomet is a kind of Sultan or Despot to be held in awe and placated, but never a Father. Moreover, consider the immeasurable distance between Mahomet and Christ—at the most, Mahomet claimed to be a Prophet, but—Christ! he could calmly say: ‘I came from the Father, and I leave the world and go to the Father.’.....also he said to his carp-ing critics: ‘Before Abraham was, I AM!’.....All these majestic utterances remove him (Christ) altogether from the category of a mere prophet, and proclaim him God—in the flesh!.....I will not say much about the distinctly lower morality of Islam, but that is undeniable. The status of woman *is* lower; the Koran allows for poly-gamy and slavery, also for proselytism by the sword; all these things are purely carnal.....”

These are a few of the slurs which have been cast upon Islam and Muslims; I hear more daily; some are too ridiculous to pay attention to.

From what I gather, these accusations are absolutely unfounded, for no real evidence is forthcoming in support of any one statement. Thus, I am even more sure of my convictions, but I am sorry for these people who are so bigoted that they will not listen to the truths which Islam proclaims. They may one day!!

Moreover, I am proud and thankful to be a Muslim, and my faith in Islam will never be shattered. Allah be praised.

RAHIMA GRIFFITHS.

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BY W. BASHYR-PICKARD, B.A. (CANTAB.).

THE OPENING OF THE QUR-ÂN.

All praise is due to Allah, Lord of the Worlds,
The Merciful, the Compassionate,
Lord of the Day of Judgment,
Thee only do we serve ; Thee only do we ask for help,
Guide us in the perfect path,
The path of those, whom Thou dost bless ;
Not the path of those, who meet Thy wrath ;
Nor those, who go astray.

Islam is the correct designation of that religion which has for so many centuries been erroneously described to Western peoples as "Mahomedanism." The word "Islam" means "submission to the Will of God," and, at the same time, denotes "peace," which cometh from submission to the Will of God.

"*Allah*" is the Arabic word meaning "the One Supreme Deity," "God," beside Whom there is no other divinity. Even in this age, and with means of communication so rapid and so perfected, we find that this fundamental point is not general knowledge to Western minds.

"*Muhammad*" (incorrectly spelt Mahomet, Mohammed, etc.) was a prophet and a *man*. He laid no claims whatsoever to divinity. Indeed he stressed his own humanity. "*Muslims*" (widely, but incorrectly, spelt Moslems) are those who have submitted to the Will of God. They lay no claim for divinity on behalf of the Prophet Muhammad. They maintain (as the Prophet himself maintained) that Muhammad was a *man*. Therefore they do not offer worship to him. They do not pray to him. Their prayers are directed towards God alone. They even pray on *behalf* of Muhammad, that the Peace and the Blessings of God may abide with him !

¹ Reproduced from *The Review*, London, September, 1933.

It is often pre-supposed in the West that Islam was a new religion introduced by the Prophet Muhammad. This also is erroneous. Islam (the religion of submission to the Will of the One Supreme God) was the religion of Adam, of Abraham, of Moses, of the various Prophets of the Old Testament and also of Jesus (upon each and all of whom be peace!). Muhammad, in his capacity of Prophet, reiterated the divine Truth, and restored the true religion in an age sunk in corruption. Muhammad's message to mankind, based on Eternal Truth, was, "There is One only God. He hath no partner, nor associate. There is no other person, being or thing worthy of worship. Worship God, and God alone."

Now let us consider Islam. The subject unfolds itself naturally into two parts, perfectly balanced : theoretical, practical ; contemplation of God, contemplation of mankind ; individual and universal. Let us, therefore, for the sake of clearness, consider Islam under two distinct headings. Let us take the wonderful simplicity of the formula of the Faith, expressed in the words : "*La ilaha ill' Allah, Muhammad-ur-Rasul-Allah*"—(*There is no god but God, and Muhammad is the Messenger of God*), and let us consider Islam, firstly, in regard to God (Whose Name be praised, the One !), and, secondly, in regard to the Prophet Muhammad (May the Peace and the Blessings of God abide with him !).

La ilaha ill' Allah. There is no god but God. The complexity of manifest life needs a simplicity for understanding. Islam makes life clear to its followers by the revelation of the Beauty of the Divine Unity. God is One. He hath no partner, no sharer, no participator, no equal, no rival ; and there is nothing like unto God. The likeness of God cannot be conceived ; it does not exist. The Unity of God is the manifestation of the meaning of existence. The beauty and the power and the wisdom

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of life is one. Unity belongeth unto God (Whose Name be praised !). Behold now, how simple is the path ! Our worship is due to One only God, Complete Possessor, Complete in Wisdom, and Complete in Power, the Eternal, the Most Merciful of the merciful ones. Our prayers are due to One only God. Pray not to saints, pray not to prophets, pray not except to the One only God, Lord of the Dominion of all things and of all beings, the Lord of the Worlds, the Hearer, the Answerer.

Now, it may be asked, what can we (brief suffering mortality) know concerning God ? How can we attain nearness to Him ? How can we rely upon Him ? Knowledge of God may be obtained (by the Permission and Grace of God) by spiritual contemplation and by reflection upon manifest life. Contemplate nature, contemplate the actions and the sufferings, and peaceful happiness of human life, and the remembrance of God will make clear some of the Attributes of God ; for through the Attributes of God lies the knowledge of God.

Now, of the Attributes of God, the most manifest is that of mercy. The ample and abundant and overflowing provision of the wants of humanity testifies to the Divine Mercy to all who have eyes to see and hearts to understand and give thanks (Praise to His Name, the Most Merciful of the merciful ones !).

Another of the Divine Attributes, of which we cannot remain unmindful, is that of Chastisement. Contemplation of human life and human sufferings makes it inevitably plain that disobedience to the Laws of God, deviation from the ways of God's Mercies, brings down the Divine Punishment. Be not so blind as to think that punishment belongeth not unto God ! God hath appointed the Measure, and by that Measure His Mercies are spread abroad abundantly for all humanity without distinction of class or race, and for all living creatures as well.

But to transgress against the Measure is to walk in the ways of punishment. Praise be to God, Who guideth !

Now let us take the second part of our subject, the second aspect of Islam.

Muhammad-ur-Rasul-Allah : Muhammad is the Messenger of God.

This is the practical side of Islam. By the revelation of God to Muhammad in the Glorious Qur-án, the way of truth is detailed, and how to walk in the way of truth is described step by step, so that those, who have ears to hear and grateful hearts, cannot fail to understand by the Grace of God, without which no one can be a believer.

And what is the way to God ? The way to God is *prayer*. Pray not to saints, pray not to apostles, pray not to prophets, but pray to God only. The importance of this first duty of prayer is clearly understood in Islam and provided for by the appointment of times of prayer, so that at no portion of the day may the world oppress, but the memory of God may ever be refreshed in the heart.

The times of prayer each day are five : in the early morning before sunrise ; a little after midday ; in the later afternoon ; at the time when the sun has just set ; and in the early night (before midnight).

And, following prayer, *Fasting* is ordained upon the Faithful, who follow the way of God, the way of Islam. Jesus (May the peace of God abide with him !) fasted ; and was there ever any prophet who fasted not ? And was there ever any pure-hearted one, who sought God in living reality, who fasted not ? Who did not assume complete control (by the Grace of God) over the powers of the body ? Fasting benefiteth the body, but more the soul, clearing the vision of the soul towards the apprehension of God (Whose Name be praised !).

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Now the guidance given to Muhammad the Prophet is *The Glorious Qur-án*, the Light of the Faith, wherein is set forth the praise of the Almighty, the Merciful. The Qur-án is the distinction between right and wrong, a guidance to the Faithful, both to this life and to the next, dealing with things seen and things unseen. If you would understand and enter into the peace of Islam, read in the Qur-án for yourself. There are explanatory translations in English. The sum totality of mankind cannot eschew social life, and live as monks, hermits and nuns, wherefore, as practical life is not to be avoided, but to be faced, clear guidance is given in the Glorious Qur-án, how a man may live a social life in the way most pleasing unto God.

Of things pleasing unto God, and increasing a man or woman in nearness to God, *Almsgiving*, or practical benevolence, is highly stressed by Islam. Give unto the near of kin, the wayfarer, the orphan, the widow, the distressed. Turn not aside him that asketh thee. Almsgiving is of two kinds, (1) a fixed rate (*Zakat*) levied upon the abundance of the rich for the benefit of the poor, and (2) at one's personal discretion and inclination, out of what one can afford. Give alms both secretly and also openly, but that given in secret is better.

Now, finally, in this second and practical part of Islam, we must mention the institution of *Pilgrimage* (Al-Hajj), for, in the yearly Pilgrimage to the Holy City of Mecca, there is a downright declaration of sincerity, and a definite realisation of world brotherhood, a brotherhood that is no dream, no unattainable ideal, but an accomplished reality. Discarding the pomp of the world and the inequalities of wordly position or riches or of poverty, the Faithful assemble, robed alike in the Pilgrim's garb of white, and perform the celebrations at the Holy Shrine, the Kaaba. Members of widely differing races assemble together in concord and equality in the sight of

God, as one peaceful family, even addressing one another as 'brother,' 'sister,' 'father,' or 'mother.' Surely unto Him shall all peoples be returned !

And now to conclude. It is, I feel, widely imagined that Islam is an "Oriental religion" and adapted only to the Oriental mould of humanity. To this I would strongly demur.

First I would ask, what great world religion is there that has not arisen "out of the East"? With the spread of knowledge and diffusion of friendship and understanding between the East and the West, humanity is awaking to the reality of the brotherhood of humanity in the worship of One, Ever-Living, All-Powerful, Most Merciful Lord ; while the adopting of Islam and the performance of the Pilgrimage to Mecca in recent years by English people of such rank and standing as Lord Headley, and, later, Lady Evelyn Cobbold, are a standing testimony that Islam is a practicable religion for English people.

Within the space of so brief an article, it is impossible to give an adequate account of Islam. We feel there may be readers desirous of information concerning questions relative to Islam, which we have not dealt with adequately, if at all. We would therefore refer such readers, desiring fuller information upon modern Islam in England to THE IMAM OF THE SHAH JEHAN MOSQUE, WOKING, SURREY.

OUR NEXT NUMBER

The month of Ramadhán begins this year on December 19th. As usual our staff will avail of our subscribers' courtsey, and we will issue a double number for January-February 1934.—ED. R. I.

THE QURANIC THEORY OF MATTER AND LIFE

THE QURANIC THEORY OF MATTER AND LIFE

BY M. F. B. SHAIKH, B.A.

There are two contending views which are very popular among philosophers about the nature of the universe. The one starts with matter and holds the universe to be material, and everything that exists in it is either matter or the emanation from it. The living organisms according to this view are made up of fine matter, and mind which is found in the more developed living organisms is "an idle and superfluous by-product" which "crops up at a certain stage in the course of material processes." This view is known as materialism. The other holds matter as an illusion, and that the universe consists of independent spiritual entities. The external world is the creation of the mind. It is projected from the mind. The mind alone exists. It is the only reality. This view is strictly opposed to materialism; and nips materialism in the bud by denying the existence of matter. This view is called Idealism.

Neither of these views is correct. There are objections against each, with which it will be out of place to deal here. Suffice it to say, that the universe is neither matter nor mind alone. Each view is a half-truth.

We shall now see what the Holy Qur-án has to say about the nature of the universe and about matter and life. The fourth verse of the thirty-second chapter says:

Allah is He Who created the heavens and the earth and what is between them in six periods.

The second verse of sixth chapter runs:

He created you from clay.

The ninth verse of thirty-second chapter states:

Then He made him (man) complete and breathed into him of His spirit, and made for you the ears, and the eyes, and the hearts.

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In the first of the above quoted verses we are told that God created the universe. In the second we are given that prior to the creation of man matter existed. It did not exist independent of God. It was created by Him, and the third says that God breathed into him his own spirit, *i.e.*, life or mind.

Thus the Holy Qur-án formulates a principle which will be accepted by all rational men. God is the First Cause of matter and life. Matter goes on evolving till a stage is reached when matter is made complete, and in matter favourable conditions are created for the reception of life, and God puts into matter His Spirit. God created matter and spirit or mind. So the universe, according to the Holy Qur-án, consists of matter and mind or life. The Holy Qur-án does not leave matter and mind hanging in the air without any thread to support them, but connects them with God. If we suppose matter and mind as two independent and self-existing realities, it will be atheism in the first place and dualism in the second. The Holy Qur-án came to establish the unity of reality in Allah, and therefore it has no place for duality of matter and mind. The unity of reality is wonderfully maintained throughout the Holy Qur-án.

The point, which we should not pass unnoticed, is that matter is not the direct creation of the Almighty. It emerged in the process of evolution. In this connection the great Muslim Missionary of our modern times, the late Al-Haj Khwaja Kamal-ud-Din, says :—

It was light created by the Lord and not matter that in the beginning gave birth to the Heavens and Earth, and science has come to the same conclusion. It says that energy becomes converted into light, which in the course of evolution, passes gradually through various worlds—gases, nebula, stars, electrons, atoms and molecules—before it turns into matter. It is in the seventh generation that elements—mother of matter—become created and pass through many stages of growth until matter itself is born in the long run.

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Again Madame Blavatsky in her book *The Secret Doctrine* expresses the same view. She is one of the founders of the Theosophic Movement. While commenting upon and explaining the mystic and theosophic meanings of the Slokas, she writes that everything is created from Light. It was the *Word* or *Logos* that created light out of darkness and the universe out of light. The theosophic view about the creation of the universe is similar to Qur-ánic view. It is old wine put in new bottles.

If we postulate that life is *not* "an idle and superfluous by-product" which "crops up at a certain stage in the course of material processes" there arise two possibilities for our consideration.

The first is that life is present in matter *ab initio*. Matter and Life exist together since their creation. Close observation of matter and life leads us to the conclusion that wherever there is matter, there is life, and *vice versa*; but the conclusion is untenable in the light of scientific and biological discoveries. It in no way authorises us to posit that Life resided with matter from the beginning, because at the present stage of evolution we see life and matter existing together. We still speak of organic and inorganic, living and non-living matter which means that there is matter without life. The Holy Qur-án has a final word to say in this idea. The thirty-third verse of the thirty-sixth chapter: "And a sign to them is the dead-earth" conveys the same idea. The "dead-earth" in the above verse signifies matter without life. The next question is whether there was life without matter. The Holy Qur-án says "and breathed into him his own spirit." The "spirit" or life was apart from matter. It was existing without matter, and when life was injected into matter that matter got life. Again the life after death, according to the Holy Qur-án, is a life of a soul—non-

material life. The next world is a world of souls, "spirits" or "minds." This view of the next life enables us to state that life does exist without matter. So there is matter without life and life without matter.

The second possibility is that if life was not present in matter *ab initio* then life must have been introduced at a later stage of the evolution of matter, as to-day they are existing together. Science tells us that the universe was at one time lifeless and dead. Our planet at one time was a "mass of molten material," and the existence of life upon such a planet seems an impossibility. In such a case, life must have been ushered in. Matter was made a vehicle for the expression of life. The onward march of evolution of matter created favourable conditions for the introduction of life into matter. The following Qur-ánic verse gives the same view: "He made him complete and breathed into him his own spirit." "He made him complete" means that God created favourable and suitable conditions, and "breathed into him his own spirit" means that God introduced life into matter. God made half of man, *i.e.*, matter, complete and introduced life, thereby completing the other half of man. Man may be taken as representing the whole living organism. Thus, according to the Holy Qur-án, life was introduced in matter at a later stage of evolution. This view is cherished by modern scientists and biologists.

Thus Islam refutes Materialism and Idealism and chalks out a new path. The principle that Islam puts forth is that Matter and Life are the contents of the universe. They are not ultimate principles as supposed by Hindu religion, but they are dependent upon God; and that life was introduced into matter in the course of evolution.

LIFE AND MISSION OF JESUS

LIFE AND MISSION OF JESUS

BY MUHAMMAD YAKUB SUFI

(Continued from Vol. XXI, page 402.)

When called upon to account for his blaspheming the established order, and (charged falsely) to have ascribed to himself the title of God, Jesus replied by reference to the sacred books in which they could not deny that the "divine name was sometimes ascribed to beings of an inferior rank, how much less therefore indignant would they be at that sacred name being assumed by him," which shows that the divine attributes which Jesus assumed were by inference from this common use in the Hebrew sacred literature than as referring to any special gift from above, otherwise there was hardly any palpable necessity for him to take shelter under the Jewish sacred books, which, as Christian apologists make us believe, he came to supersede.

Finding his explanation not satisfactory to his hearers Jesus returned once again to the district beyond the Jordan, seized apparently with the fear that a similar fate as that of John the Baptist awaited him. We need not dilate upon the situation created by his preachings, the more he preached the more he roused the Sanhedrin to opposition, till he closed the scene of this part by making a "valedictory promise" to his followers that his religion will not die with his death, but that his place will be taken by a "*mysterious* comforter who will teach, guide and reconcile (the differences) which now divide each individual from the other and Nation from Nation."¹

The word "*mysterious*" before the "*comforter*" never occurs in the old version of St. John's Evangile in Greek, and want of space compels me to forego the quotation of the original in full, but I will quote one

¹ History of Christianity, by Milman, Vol. I, p. 237.

expression therefrom. The words used are "allon kai Parakletos doosai umin" which are thus translated in a Dutch Bible "en Hij zal u eenen anderen Trooster geven." The words *allon* (Greek) and *anderen* (Dutch) clear up the whole sense, rendering it "other than myself" which is just the equivalent to "another prophet after me" (comforter=Ahmad). In an edition of the Greek Bible of 1865 the following note appears on the word "Parakleton (παράκλητον)—One who is called in to aid ; one who pleads any one's cause : an advocate, a helper." To force it to mean the Holy Ghost is simply a perversion of the language. One of the various names of Muhammad is also *Shafi*—an advocate, a helper. The Christian historian (Milman) by substituting "mysterious" for "another" has rendered a great disservice to history.

Away from the prosecuting Jewry Jesus further retired to an enclosure in the garden of Gethsemane, his customary place of retreat well-known to his disciples. Here he was on a perpetual vigil, while his followers lay dead sleep around, passing a part of the night in devotion.

He returned again to his sleeping companions, evidently to impart to them some perturbations of his own mind and seek some consolation in their advice, but was pained to find them always unavailable. The whole scene of his pending trial, nay, his very end appalled him, and all this allowed him no rest.

He once again prays to the "Almighty Father to release him from the task which, although of such importance to the welfare of mankind, is to be accomplished by such fearful means." Further commentary on his character is to be read in the "sweat that falls like large drops of blood to the ground" as the hour of trial approaches. It was now about mid-night, and the stillness that spread all round appears to have had a galling effect on the mind of

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Jesus, for he could no longer forbear to see his followers enjoy sweet slumbers, while he was himself in such a terrible stage of mind. He rudely woke them up and told them to prepare for the inevitable, but all this fell upon incredulous ears. for his disciples were still supposing that "his unbounded power" would secure him from any untoward attempt of his enemies, "when lo! and behold the garden was filled with armed men, gleaming with lamps."

Judas had done his work either to try his master or for some nefarious gain. Peter drew his sword, but was repressed, and the whole scene in the Bethsemane Garden closed with Jesus being led prisoner to the courtyard of Criaphus to stand his trial.

Here new experiences awaited him. He was left severely alone. Even Peter, his fiery disciple, who had obtained an admission into the Hall, denied him and sought his own safety in a false oath. Thus abandoned at the hour of greatest need Jesus once more turned his eyes towards his disciples, but Peter, counting upon his own interests, hastily "retreated from the sight of his Master" providing "a proof certain in this as to the effect Jesus' long teaching had wrought upon his disciples."

The crucial moment had now arrived. The High Priest had succeeded in working up the popular feeling against Jesus which clamoured for his execution, but rather from fear "to assume the power of life and death without the royal sanction" or in view of the sanctity of the season, the High Priest (in fact the whole of the Sanhedrin) wished to save himself the ignominy of putting to death an innocent man. The matter was referred to the Pilate who, under the humane influence of his wife, was convinced of the innocence of Jesus, but felt unable to save him. In his confusion he referred to Herod, who already smarting under the crime of murdering John, the Baptist, for

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a dance, sent him back to the Pilate. This renewed the embarrassment of Pilate, who after many endeavours to do a good turn to Jesus, yielded to the madness of the people after appealing to them in vain to choose between the prophet of Nazareth, whose guilt was not proved, and Barabbas, a condemned insurgent.

Jesus was next made over to the Roman lictors, and the treatment he received at the hands of the Chief Priest, the mob and the Roman soldiery need hardly be recapitulated here. Suffice it to say, that the Law had its usual course, and the man of God, at whose command at one time trees dried up and rivers became fordable, etc., etc., met his death "magnanimously on the cross" (what this magnanimity consisted in, is for the Christian apologists to say) uttering the words of the 22nd Psalm—Eli, Eli, lima sabaktani—drowned in the taunting allusions to his Messiahship and the royal title he was pleased to assume in all his addresses to the public.

The only conclusion one can draw from the above sketch, according to Lessing, may be given in Lessing's own words ".....und so wird Christus der erste Zuverlässige pracktsiche Lehrer der unsterblichkeit der seele"¹ which totally denies him the roll of a Messiah, which was prophesied of "another."

¹ "And so was Christ the first certain practical teacher of the Immortality of Soul." I can hardly understand his *zuverlässige* (certain) since the knowledge of the immortality of soul was common among the Assyrians, Babylonians and Egyptians thousands of years before Christ.

CORRESPONDENCE

C/o The Anglo-Persian Oil Co., Ltd.,
KOWAIT, Persian Gulf.

THE IMAM,

The Mosque, Woking, Surrey.

DEAR BROTHER IN ISLAM,

Assalamo alaikum wa Rahmatullahi wa Barakatohu.

In the August number of the *Islamic Review*, there is a letter from C. J. T. In it he requests for a copy of the Holy Qur-án in English. If he has not already received one, will you please send him a copy and inform me of the cost that I may send you the amount by the return of post. If he or any other inquirer would wish to correspond with one who has been a Muslim since 1891 and who made the first pilgrimage in 1893 openly as an English Muslim, and who has spent many years studying the Holy Faith in Arabic through the Qur-án and Hadith, you may give my address.

With prayers that the Guider, the Merciful may guide your good works.

I remain,

Your well-wisher and Brother in Islam,
(AL-HAJ) ABDULLA F. WILLIAMSON,

THE IMAM,

The Mosque, Woking.

FOPSHAM.

DEAR SIR,

I have been wanting to write to you for some time to thank you for your great kindness to me in lending me books, and at last I am doing so. I have been wanting a good copy of the Holy Qur-án for some time for my own, so at last I have managed to get the money to buy the copy you so kindly sent me, also for the other book¹ which I found very stimulating to serious thought. I am not often able to afford myself books other than the formal study type as my pay is not very much as yet, and a small wage does not go very far as I am married. I must thank you for a piece of very real help. A few weeks ago the "Daily Express"

¹ *Islam and Civilization* by the late Khwaja Kamal-ud-Din.

printed an article on Islam called "What.....millions believe." Many of my friends read that article, and of course as I never keep my views secret, not being ashamed of them, they very soon tackled me on the old, old bone of contention, Islam's treatment of women. I backed up my views with such texts from the Qur-án as I could find at such short notice to prove that Islam is the one religion that has always advocated the better treatment of womenkind; and reminded them that whereas a married woman in Islam is allowed her own property in England that very wise measure has not been in force such a very long time. I was delighted to see your letter published the next day telling the readers of that paper the truth. It seems that the world has a very poor idea of Islam due to years of bias and mis-information. Many of those I speak with, in fact the great majority, seem to think much as I do, that whereas they do believe in God, few of them, those who have really given the matter very sincere thought, really accept the belief that Christ was divine. I think there is very little atheism in the world to-day, but a lot of what they call agnosticism and rationalism does exist. Often you hear people say that they believe certain things only in the Christian religion, and they call themselves "broad-minded Christians." But in fact all the time their views are in accordance with the Islamic faith. They have a kind of feeling that it is something foreign and not for English people. Perhaps there is a little of the "right little, tight little island" feeling about, as not many seem to have the "world-unity" feeling, but rather, a lot of the Victorian jingoism. I am afraid it will not sound very patriotic of me to say so, but proud as I am of all that my countrymen have done in the past, I feel that it is patriotism that is the big "drag-back" to the progress of the world as a whole. I think that the Economic Conference was a very good case in point, as there were dozens of delegates, all ostensibly coming together for one purpose, the furtherance of world prosperity, but we all know that they were there for no such object: they were there for one thing only; each delegate was there looking out for a chance to do his own country a bit of good, and the whole thing was a glorified scramble with never more than a pretence of doing the best for the world as a whole. People do not seem to understand that as long as one nation is climbing under the present conditions, it is doing so at the expense of the other nations which it is trampling down.

It is a sad thing, after the terrible mistake of 1914, to see the world in such a turmoil. How much we sing of the brotherhood of the Churches, and the brotherhood of men, and then at each other's throats we go! I am looking forward to the chance of speaking to you in person one day, and I may manage to come up to Woking one week-end on the Saturday to see you. I so rarely get a chance to really exchange views with anyone else, and I feel that a chat with you would put me right in many little doubts. The

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idea of a God is so vast that it seems like being turned loose in a strange and beautiful country, where one would be in danger of getting lost while trying to fathom out everything. I find it is really surprising to sit down sometimes and see what you really do believe, I know that many a following sheep who follows a certain line of worship would get a surprise if only he was to do that.

How hard it is sometimes to be really honest with oneself, I wonder if we do not sometimes tell ourselves more lies than we ever do to other people.

Time is passing quickly, and I have a lot more letters to write. I must draw to a close now. Thanking you for the real help you have given me.

Believe me to be,
Gratefully yours,
H. E. P.

[Some of our new brothers in the fold are infinitely more anxious than ourselves for a new world of Islam. We doubt if there are many born Muslims who can think in such an interesting way in this matter as a young British Muslim here is doing now. For some reasons he does not like to advertise his name. We draw the special attention of our Muslim brethren to the following suggestions of his which are contained in his recent letter to us.—ED. I. R.]

DEAR MAULVI ABDUL MAJID,

I write to suggest what I regard, next to the conversion of China and Russia, the greatest requirement of the age. The Woking organization should circularize the officiating Imams of the principal mosques in all large Muslim towns, pointing out that the weakness of present day Islam as a world-force is due to lack of unity; that the enemies of Islam are in the ascendant because they are able to fight against Islam whose strength is scattered, that if all the now-easily broken twigs of Islam were bound together into a bundle breakage would become an impossibility, that the united power of 200 million Muslims directed towards any one goal would be a power at once irresistible and tremendous, such as no power on earth could withstand, that the brotherhood of Islam demands that every section should seek to aid the aims and well-being of every other section, suggesting—

(a) that in every Muslim country a monthly conference of Imams irrespective of differences of opinion be held;

(b) that the first of such conferences should nominate a delegate (or delegates, if opinion is not unanimous) to represent the views and wishes of that conference, which will be placed before such delegates from time to time;

(c) that the delegates thus nominated by the Imams of every Muslim country, should sit in permanent session either in London or Woking, the body thus formed being known as the International Muslim Association ;

(d) that the I. M. A. shall consider continually the needs, wishes and desires of every section of the Muslim world, and shall by the recommendations of concerted action by all sections in Islam further the needs of any one section, which may itself be quite powerless ;

(e) that the cost of maintaining delegates be met by nominating bodies, *i.e.*, the monthly national conferences of Imams and be spread so that all mosques are contributors ;

(f) that the I. M. A. should welcome all ideas and suggestions for the furtherance of Islam, whether presented through delegates or by Imams ;

(g) that all Imams should undertake to make known by public addresses whatever may be communicated (*i.e.*, news, ideas, recommendations, etc.) to them by the I. M. A. ;

(h) that constant communication be maintained between the I. M. A. and the National Conferences, whose delegates should receive instructions from time to time, both from the nominating bodies and the I. M. A. ;

The consummation of such a scheme would place our fingers on the springs of power and would give us a position of enormous prestige. I would do everything I could to make the I. M. A. an outstanding success.

A. C. B.

THE SECRETARY,

The Mosque, Woking.

ADEN.

20-9-33.

DEAR SIR,

Aden is a British territory but almost the whole population are Muslims and the branch (of your Society) if organised would help the Headquarters much. There are in Aden like myself people who are particularly interested in Islam, and we are afraid that the hands of Missionaries who are working most energetically might be extended. At present they are working hard and have opened schools, but up to the present (we thank the Almighty) the conversions made by them have not exceeded the number of the fingers of the hand.

Yours sincerely,

M. K. K.

TWENTY YEARS AGO

TWENTY YEARS AGO

EMISSARY OF ISLAM¹

Following the announcement of Lord Headley's conversion to Islam we may expect very soon to hear even more sensational news of conversions in high places, according to Mr. Khwaja Kamal-ud-Din, B.A., LL.B., who is the man best in a position to know.

Mr. Kamal-ud-Din landed in England thirteen months ago to convert as many Englishmen as he can to his faith. He is a remarkable personality. After a successful and lucrative career in India as a lawyer, he has constituted himself the emissary of Islam in these islands, has come here at his own expense, started a monthly *Review*, and with three friends has taken charge of the Moslem Mosque at Woking.

Since he came he has frequently met and corresponded with Lord Headley, who contributes an article to the current number of his *Review*.

During the past few months he has delivered several lectures, including an address to "The Heretics of Cambridge" on the comparative merits of Islamic and Christian principles, and an address to the ladies of the Lyceum Club on the Position of Women from Judaism to Islam, in the course of which he elaborated the thesis that "the Lord Mohammad is the only vindicator of female rights."

Mosque and house are on the outskirts of Woking, buried away in a strange old corner of parkland that is dark with conifers. Here, in a large bare room, Mr. Kamal-ud-Din received me and explained his hopes for the religious conquest of these islands.

Mohammadanism, Mr. Kamal-ud-Din holds, is the religion of the future. He hinted at the remarkable developments shortly to come which I have mentioned.

Mr. Kamal-ud-Din spoke of our own missionary efforts in India and of the condition of things in England with the most scrupulous courtesy, but it was evident that he was not profoundly impressed with the state of our religious faith. He has made a few converts, but he explained his business is simply to lay a true, plain, unvarnished account of Islam before the people, and to leave their own hearts and conscience to do the rest. "But do not fall into the mistake of thinking that we are hostile to Christianity," he urged. "Our faith includes belief in the teachings of Jesus.—" *Manchester Dispatch*.

¹ *Islamic Review*, December 1913.

WHY I BECAME A MUSLIM¹

Lord Headley in an interview with the *Daily Mail* representative said the following:—

“ It is the intolerance of those professing the Christian religion which more than anything else is responsible for my secession. You never hear Mahommedans speak concerning those of other religions as you hear Christians talk of one another. They may feel very sorry that other persons do not hold the Mahommedan faith, but they don't condemn them to everlasting damnation because of a differing belief.

“ The purity and simplicity of the Mahommedan religion, its freedom from dogma and sacerodotalism, and the obvious truth of it make a special appeal to me. The earnestness and the sincerity of Mahommedans, too, is greater than anything I have seen on the part of Christians. The ordinary Christian man puts on religion on Sunday as a respectable habit. When Sunday is over his religion is discarded for the rest of the week. With the Mahommedan, on the contrary, there is no distinction between Sunday and any other day. He is always thinking of what he can do in God's service.”—*Daily Mail*.

ISLAM AND OTHER RELIGIONS

BY THE LATE KHWAJA KAMAL-UD-DIN

All religions are a matter of history. If a man must look to some Holy Scripture for the light he has to receive from a religion, no religion should claim our allegiance unless its record is absolutely authentic. In this respect Islam seems to me to possess merits of its own. The Scriptures of all other religions have now been found, as is even admitted by their respective adherents, to be wanting in genuineness.

The Vedic verses are susceptible of contradictory interpretations; they have given rise to innumerable sects, who differ from each other even in the fundamentals of their religion while they all receive their inspiration from the same Book. The translation of the Vedas given by one class of Hindus is condemned by the others. The Bible is no more looked upon as the word of God.

¹ *Islamic Review*, December 1913.

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Even Rabbis and high dignitaries of church are to-day ceasing to believe in its authenticity. On the other hand, Al-Qur-án, the Holy Book of Islam, is admitted by friends and foes to be the very words revealed to Muhammad. The Book has maintained its purity till now.

Now, whatever may be the worth of the teachings of a religion, I think, one cannot consider or accept its claims when its very source is of a dubious character.

We are constrained to come to the same conclusion as to the Founders of the various religious systems. We know nothing about the authors or recipients of Vedic revelations excepting their names. Similarly, the strictly historical aspect of the Lord of Christianity is not free from doubt, we know very little of him. Mary, we read, gave birth to the illustrious Nazarene; but soon after the event she and her husband fled from Judæa with the child; and after some twelve years Jesus is seen in synagogues finding fault with the Rabbis. Then the curtain drops again. Another gap of some eighteen years, and the Master comes back out of an Essenic monastery, and is seen on the banks of the River Jordan. But his ministry was too short for him to become our perfect specimen and guide in the manifold and divine walks of human life. A few sermons, a few miracles, a few prayers accompanied by a few curses are not enough to give humanity a religion. His movements are of meteoric character which presents few incidents of note and consequence, excepting his crucifixion. Moses was no doubt a great law-giver, an historic character, liberator of his nation from their bondage in Egypt, worker of wonders and performer of miracles, but not an example for practical purposes in real life.

The life of Muhammad is different. From the cradle to the grave everything of note in his life is narrated and preserved in a well-authenticated record. It is amazing

to find in him an assemblage of the best of characteristics so rare in others. One is at a loss to understand how he could unite in himself all the best qualities of different characters. He is meek and at the same time courageous ; modest as a maiden, but the bravest of the soldiers on a battlefield. While with children he is loved for his playfulness and endearing talk to the little ones ; when in the company of sages and old men, he is respected for his wisdom and far-sightedness. Truthful, honest, trustworthy ; a reliable friend, a loving father and husband, a dutiful son, and a helpful brother, Muhammad is the same man whether in adversity or prosperity ; affluence or indigence cannot change him ; unruffled in his temperament whether in peace or in war. Kind and hospitable, liberal in giving but abstemious for himself. In short, judge Muhammad from whatever angle of human character you will, and he is nowhere found wanting.

The character of Muhammad is perfect. His opponents cannot lay a finger on a single flaw in his private life. And whatever has been said against his public career in one or two things, involves really a matter of principle. They say he had more than one wife ; that he waged war ; that he did this, that, and the other ; but before we judge him in these matters we have to decide as to the validity of the principles under which he worked. If polygamy is a matter of necessity in certain circumstances and an economic measure sometimes, then why find fault with Muhammad, when all the great men and benefactors of humanity, especially in the world of religion, have all of them had more than one wife. As to the use of the sword, the whole world until now has taken the greatest pride in unsheathing the weapon. War has hitherto been an indispensable institution. A Prophet was needed to teach the world the true ethics of war, and who can deny the nobility of Muhammad in this respect ? He

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unsheathed his sword only to crush evil and defend truth. With great care I read the accounts of every war waged by him, and they were all in self-defence.

There is something unique in this great man ; he is the only teacher among the noble race of prophets who brought his mission to success. Jesus was crushed by evil, and words of despair and despondency were on his lips on the Cross. Muhammad really crushed the serpent, but, just in the moment of his victory, when the real " generation of vipers " was at his feet, his character revealed another noble aspect—that of forgiveness. No student of history can read the account of the conquest of Mecca by Muhammad without bowing down to that great hero. He not only forgives his cruel oppressors, but raises them to places of dignity and honour. Who knows what Jesus would have done if he had achieved any victory over his enemies ? After all, he said that he had come not to send peace on the earth, but a sword. Moses, Ramchandra and Krishna, the other great teachers in the world of religion, disclosed not a gleam of mercy in their dealings with their enemies.

It does not take long to pass in review the various religious persuasions with their tenets and doctrines. Whatever may have been the original form of Hinduism, it is now one vast accretion of ceremonialism and sacrifice. In fact, there does not exist a definition of Hinduism wide enough to comprise all its sections and sub-divisions. Animism, element-worship, hero-worship, polytheism in its worst shapes, monotheism, though not in its pure form—all come under the heading of Hinduism. It possesses its philosophy, but it is a philosophy which has no bearing whatever on practical life ; it tries to solve certain riddles—for example, the problem of ultimate pain and pleasure, and here it speaks of the transmigration of the soul ; but all this is a species of mental luxury possessing no practical

advantage. Ceremonialism and sacrifices, no doubt, are not without their uses, but they are of secondary importance—a means to certain ends—whereas in Hinduism they have become essentials.

Judaism brought light and culture into the world, but in the course of time it, too, became merged in ceremonialism and sacrifice. The vice of ceremonial piety lies in the fact that when once a person has observed its demands he thinks himself to be better than his neighbour, no matter what crime he may commit. For this very reason the Brahmins in Hinduism and the Pharisees in Judaism considered themselves absolved of all the duties laid upon other members of society. Jesus did not come with a new religion, nor did he found a Church; he was a Jew of the Jews. Jealous for the religion taught by Moses, he came to redeem the teachings of the Master from the formalism of the Pharisees. He had the courage to expose their hollowness and hypocrisy. In short, his aim was to reform Judaism, but his enemies would not allow him to do so, and so he failed in the end. Then St. Paul came on the scene, but instead of carrying on the work of Jesus, he grafted on the old faith something quite new and repugnant to it—the religion of the Blood and its grace.

It is called the “New Covenant,” but it seems to me only a reappearance of old Paganism with a change of name and setting. The story of Christianity may be summed up in a few words: Man drowned in sin and God alienated from him and in anger. To appease His wrath He sends His own son to the world through a virgin’s womb. The son is brought to the Cross and pays the penalty for all human sin, thus washing away the sins of humanity with his blood. He dies for all, and then through his resurrection brings new life to mankind. This is the superstructure of the Pauline schism as it was never taught by Jesus.

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But it is not a new revelation. It has now come to light that Jesus as portrayed by Paul and others as "the new Adam" is only the last of the virgin-born Sun-gods—Mithra, Apollo, Bacchus, Horus, Osiris, and others; all of them born at the first hour of the 25th of December.

Thus, centuries before the construction of the Christian Church, different countries had already evolved a system of religion which Christianity repeated word by word in the writings of the early Fathers. In fact, the Roman Catholic Church, the first church on Pauline lines after Jesus, is just a replica of the old cult of mystery; and Christian worship remains the sun-worship with all its old features. How can we stigmatize Paganism as a false religion when all its features did but forestall the official Church in the West?

Viewed from this stand-point Islam alone shines forth. It is a religion of action, of good morals and ethics; a religion simple and practical. The Islamic tenets are not dogmatic in their nature, they are reasonable and consistent with intelligence. They have a direct bearing on life.

Doubtless Islam is not free from some sort of formalities. Muslims also make sacrifice, but this is what the Holy Qur-án says:—

It is not righteousness that you turn your faces towards the East and the West, but righteousness is this, that one should believe in Allah and the last day and the angels and the book and the prophets, and give away wealth out of love for Him to the near of kin and the orphans and the needy and the wayfarer and the beggars and for (the emancipation of) the captives, and keep up prayer and pay the poor-rate; and the performers of their promise when they make a promise, and the patient in distress and affliction and in time of conflict—these are they who are true (to themselves), and these are they who guard (against evil)¹.

What a wonderful, decisive and bold statement! It brushes away ceremonialism completely. Islam has a few formalities, but they seem to be essential—one of them being the turning of the face, when in prayer, towards

¹ Holy Qur-án, 2: 177.

Mecca. It indicates the place that gave birth to Islam, and is hence a necessity ; but the above verse says that doing so *in itself* is not a virtue unless thereby we are helped to observe certain beliefs and actions which are there set out. In fact, Muslims turn their faces to Mecca to remember and renew the inspiration they first received from that sacred place ; and if turning our faces to Mecca in itself is of no value, then what of other ceremonial acts ?

Muslims do observe sacrifice, but not to appease Divine wrath. One of the objects is to " Feed the poor man who is contented, and the beggar."¹ This institution also supplies an occasion for being benevolent to others, and it is a symbol of the religion of Allah ; as the Holy Qur-án says, we have to submit to His will as the animals under the knife have to submit to ours. And then a verse on the subject in the following thundering words denudes sacrifices of the merits that had been attached to them by other religions—such as the propitiation of Divine anger :—

There does not reach Allah their flesh nor their blood, but to Him is acceptable the guarding (against evil) on your part ; thus has He made them subservient to you, that you may magnify Allah because He has guided you aright ; and give good news to those who do good (to others)².

Christianity no doubt did away with all the ritual that Jesus observed himself, because his personal sacrifice, as they say, atoned for it and absolved the believers in the blood from the ceremonial burden. But another set of rituals and formalities entered into the Church as a legacy from Paganism, and the position is worse than before.

Though all the peoples in the world were respectively given a book for their guidance from the Lord, they are all lost to-day with the exception of the Vedas, the Bible, and the Qur-án. The two first scriptures are of a kindred nature, but the third exhibits an absolutely different character. The Vedas and the Bible speak respectively of some particular nations, the so-called " chosen people "

¹ Holy Qur-án, 20 : 36.

² Ibid. 22 : 37.

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of God or gods ; while the Holy Qur-án is neither a narrative of a tribe nor a story of any individual. It concerns itself exclusively with man in general. Man and his God is its chief theme.

After speaking of the creation of the world and man, the chief interest of the Hebrew Scripture lies in one particular branch of the human race—the descendants of Abraham through Isaac. It speaks of the migration of the Israelites from the land of Abraham, their settlement in Egypt. The Bible is a complete story of the rise and fall of the Hebrews, with Moses at their head as the lawgiver and bringer of good tidings of the coming race, and with Jesus, the last of the race, shedding tears of grief on the imminent fall. Just as the Holy Bible concerns itself with the Hebrews, so the Vedas speak of another race from Central Asia called Aryans, who crossed the River Indus and took up their abode in the western part of India. It speaks of their rituals and sacrifices, it refers to their fights with the aborigines of the country and the final victory of the former over the latter. Thus the two books are more or less a history of the two tribes, with the mention of religion and its accessories as a matter of incident. The Holy Qur-án, on the other hand, is purely a book of God's religion given to man. The elevation and progress of the human race or its degradation or downfall are the chief topics of the Arab Revelation. The Qur-án, doubtless, speaks of certain persons and certain nations, but such allusions are not the main object of the Book ; they come in by way of illustration. For example, the Book lays down certain principles and doctrines for human edification ; it warns man against the deeds that are sure to bring him to the lowest ebb ; it reads him lessons of morality and of ethics ; it speaks of spirituality and godliness ; and it is in elucidation of these teachings that it makes reference to events in the lives of certain men—prophets and their enemies—and nations.

It is for this reason that the Qur-án has not generally given full accounts of the people thus alluded to. It is not a collection of stories, but a book of economic, moral and spiritual instruction.

Neither the Vedas nor the Bible seem to specify any object of universal interest for their revelation. God no doubt spoke to Moses at Sinai and ordered him to go to Pharaoh with a message demanding freedom for the Israelites. After the Exodus He again spoke to Moses and gave him the Ten Commandments; and Moses when in need of guidance goes to his Lord from time to time, and the Lord expresses His will for the guidance of His people. Similarly, whenever the chosen people are in difficulty or in trouble, Jehovah sends His angels with words to meet the occasion. On the same lines we find various Mantras—hymns—in the Vedas revealed to the old Hindu *Rishis*. The Ten Commandments undoubtedly promulgate the lines of action necessary to form a society. But any human society desirous of keeping itself in a healthy condition could have discovered these principles even without the help of any revelation. Therefore, the Qur-ánic Revelation is far above these primitive and temporal needs. It comes to raise man to the highest height to which he is able to soar. The first call that came to Muhammad in the cave Hira is a call for the uplifting of man in general. Muhammad was not called upon to serve his own nation, nor did the heavenly dove descend from above to choose the Son of God from among his fellow-countrymen. Muhammad is inspired to raise his fellow-beings, from the depth of degradation to the zenith of greatness. His first Revelation is:—

Read in the name of your Lord Who created. He created man from a clot. Read and your Lord is Most Honourable, Who taught (to write) with the pen: Taught man what he knew not. Nay! man is most surely inordinate, because he sees himself free from want.¹

¹. Holy Qur-án, 96 : 1—7.

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Man is ordered through Muhammad to read, to cultivate the art of writing, for the spread of books and enlightenment, and to discover sciences not known before, thereby bringing humanity to a position most honourable, because his Creator is Himself most honourable and His creation should index the greatness of the Maker. Matter reaches its physical consummation in the form of man, and Nature cannot improve upon it any further. But the same matter evolves a new thing in the human frame—human consciousness, the sum-total of the passions, which when refined give rise to intellect, sentiment, sociability, morality, ethics, religion and spirituality. As a full-fledged man on the physical plane evolves from a clot of blood in the womb, so was human consciousness in “clot” condition at the appearance of Muhammad, who was deputed to show his fellow-beings the right path, as revealed to him by God, that will bring forth all that is noble and good in man.

This grand object the Holy Book takes for its revelation and makes mention of it in its very beginning.¹ When it defines the most exalted position which man is entitled to achieve, it also indicates the lowest degradation to which he may descend. In the story of Adam² the high and low conditions of man are defined. He is the vicegerent of God on earth. He is to receive homage from the angels of heaven and earth; but if he is led astray from the right path he will be deprived of the means that contribute to his happiness.³ With all our civilization we have not as yet attained the height which we have to achieve under the directions of the Last Book. We have not secured the position of being able to bring the sun and the moon into subjection.⁴ This is the goal which the Qur-án prescribes for us in our sojourn on the earth. In this connection the Qur-án further reveals to us that

¹ Holy Qur-án, 2 : 5.

³ Ibid., 2 : 36.

² Ibid., 2, sect. 4.

⁴ Ibid., 14 : 32-33 ; 16 : 12.

we possess the highest capabilities,¹ but as we have arisen from an animal state and carry with us certain carnal cravings, the Book warns us that our way to the goal is beset with difficulties. We are liable to be degraded to the lowest of the low,² and therefore we need guidance.³ This is another purpose of Qur-ánic Revelation. We are in the dark⁴ and we need a light, and the Book claims to be that light. Let St. Paul blackguard human nature ; Islam says that we possess an immaculate nature at the time of our birth. Hell is the reward of sin, and heaven is reserved for those who leave this earth sinless. The child, who dies at its very birth, must go to heaven, under Islamic teaching, but he is foredoomed to hell according to Christian principles. In other words, heaven is our birthright under Islam. We may lose it by our subsequent misdeeds. But according to Christianity we are born for hell unless reclaimed by our faith in the Blood. Similarly, sin is a heritage according to Church belief, but it is an after-acquisition under Islam, and can be avoided.

Thus the sole object of Christian Revelation is to bring man out of the slough of sin up to the brink of virtue, but Islam finds man already on its banks at his birth, and comes to raise him to its highest flight that will bring him near the precincts of Divinity. The Qur-án is rational in its teachings, while the Hindu and Hebrew Books are dogmatic in imparting their messages. The Books speak of God, of angels, of resurrection, and the Last Day ; of Divine messengership, and accountability for present actions in the hereafter ; but they make no attempt to substantiate these verities by any intelligent arguments. But the Qur-án makes frequent appeal to our understanding and rational judgment. It draws our attention to various manifestations of Nature as evidence of what it enunciates. It would not ask its readers to accept any of its teachings, except on the strength of reasoning.

¹ Holy Qur-án 95 : 4.

² Ibid., 95 : 5.

³ Ibid., 95 : 6.

⁴ Ibid., 14 : sec. I.

ISLAM AND OTHER RELIGIONS

This is why modern science has only served to strengthen Muslim belief in the Qur-ánic truths. We are rational beings. Reason and logic play a prominent part in all our beliefs and persuasions.

Again, the first two revelations do not specifically speak of the articles of their faith ; each inquirer must gather them for himself from these Books. In the Christian Churches the task fell to the Church Councils. The Articles of the Christian faith as promulgated by the Fathers were collected in the Book of Common Prayer, and have been the object of successive revisions from time to time.

In Hinduism, want of a definite statement in the Vedas as to what were the articles of Faith in the Vedic religion gave rise to innumerable sects that differ from each other even in their fundamental tenets.

From such a fate the Qur-án has saved the Muslims ; for it has clearly laid down in various verses the Islamic articles of Faith.¹

Thus, according to the Holy Qur-án, faith which cannot be translated into action is no faith at all. Consequently, belief in something accepted as verity on the basis of a dogma does not come within the category of religious beliefs in Islam. In fact, dogmatic doctrines have no significance for a Muslim. Faith, however, in the Qur-ánic sense of the word, plays a most important part in moulding every human word or action. All our movements are the portraits of such of our concepts as are based upon sure and certain faith. Every item of our routine, however insignificant, is but a motion-picture of our belief in the existence or the non-existence of things. Any change in such a belief straightaway produces a change in the routine. Even a slight movement of our lips, or of any other portion of the body, springs from some belief or other. For instance, we cannot utter a word unless we believe in the audibility and articulation of the sound we make as well as in the ability of our

¹ Holy Qur-án 2 : 285.

hearer to hear and give to our words the same meanings which they convey to us. Similar belief is always present in our mind concerning everything that emanates from us. This emphasizes the importance of a vigilant and wise choice of faith in every avenue of our existence, since soundness of action follows soundness of belief, and more especially is this so in our religious beliefs, seeing that no other belief approaches them in strength and in influence on the ordering of our life.

Every religion lays down certain articles of faith as its basic principles, demanding from its adherents an implicit faith therein. These basic principles may or may not appeal to our intelligence, or serve any useful purpose for us in this life, but it is nevertheless claimed for them that they possess unique merits in securing salvation and happiness in the life beyond the grave for those who hold them.

As to that life, almost every religion strikes the same note. Faith in tenets diametrically opposed to each other in teaching have by different religions been invested with similar merits that are to accrue to the believer in his life after death. If a faith in the divinity of A and B, for instance, brings salvation to the believer according to one religion, it dooms him to everlasting punishment, in the life to come, according to the other. No religion, on the other hand, has any decisively logical support for its assertions. No one as yet has returned from behind the veil to bear witness to the truth of his faith. Under these circumstances one is forced to conclude that a religion's claim for belief in its doctrines should never be heeded, unless those doctrines satisfy our intelligence and have been tested in the crucible of utility as regards our present life. A plunge in the dark is a dangerous proceeding, but it is infinitely more dangerous to believe in things that not only have no bearing on our present life, but sometimes are actually harmful in their effects on the building of our character.

(To be continued.)

WHAT IS ISLAM ?

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[The following is a very brief account of Islam, and some of its teachings. For further details, please write to the IMAM of the Mosque, Woking, Surrey, England.]

ISLAM, THE RELIGION OF PEACE.—The word Islam literally means: (1) Peace; (2) the way to achieve peace; (3) submission; as submission to another's will is the safest course to establish peace. The word in its religious sense signifies complete submission to the Will of God.

OBJECT OF THE RELIGION.—Islam provides its followers with the perfect code whereby they may work out what is noble and good in man, and thus maintain peace between man and man.

THE PROPHET OF ISLAM.—Muhammad, popularly known as the Prophet of Islam, was, however, the last Prophet of the Faith. Muslims, *i.e.*, the followers of Islam, accept all such of the world's Prophets, including Abraham, Moses and Jesus, as revealed the Will of God for the guidance of humanity.

THE QUR-AN.—The Gospel of the Muslim is the Qur-án. Muslims believe in the Divine origin of every other sacred book, inasmuch as all such previous revelations have become corrupted through human interpolation, the Qur-án, the last book of God, came as a recapitulation of the former Gospels.

ARTICLES OF FAITH IN ISLAM.—These are seven in number : belief in (1) Allah ; (2) Angels ; (3) Books from God ; (4) Messengers from God ; (5) the Hereafter ; (6) the Premeasurement of good and evil ; (7) Resurrection after death.

The life after death, according to Islamic teaching, is not a new life, but only a continuance of this life, bringing its hidden realities into light. It is a life of unlimited progress ; those who qualify themselves in this life for the progress will enter into Paradise, which is another name for the said progressive life after death, and those who get their faculties stunted by their misdeeds in this life will be the denizens of the Hell—a life incapable of appreciating heavenly bliss, and of torment—in order to get themselves purged of all impurities and thus to become fit for the life in Heaven. State after death is an image of the spiritual state in this life.

The sixth article of faith has been confused by some with what is popularly known as Fatalism. A Muslim neither believes in Fatalism nor Predestination ; he believes in Premeasurement. Everything created by God is for good in the given use and under the given circumstances. Its abuse is evil and suffering.

PILLARS OF ISLAM.—These are five in number: (1) declaration of faith in the Oneness of God, and in the Divine Messengership of Muhammad ; (2) Prayer ; (3) Fasting ; (4) Almsgiving ; (5) Pilgrimage to the Holy Shrine at Mecca.

ATTRIBUTES OF GOD.—The Muslims worship One God—the Almighty, the All Knowing, the All-Just, the Cherisher of All the

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Worlds, the Friend, the Guide, the Helper. There is none like Him. He has no partner. He is neither begotten nor has He begotten any son or daughter. He is Indivisible in Person. He is the Light of the Heavens and the Earth, the Merciful, the Compassionate, the Glorious, the Magnificent, the Beautiful, the Eternal, the Infinite, the First and the Last.

FAITH AND ACTION.—Faith without action is a dead letter. Faith by itself is insufficient, unless translated into action. A Muslim believes in his own personal accountability for his actions in this life and in the hereafter. Each must bear his own burden, and none can expiate for another's sin.

ETHICS OF ISLAM.—"Imbue yourself with Divine Attributes," says the noble Prophet. God is the prototype of man, and His Attributes form the basis of Muslim ethics. Righteousness in Islam consists in leading a life in complete harmony with the Divine Attributes. To act otherwise is sin.

CAPABILITIES OF MAN IN ISLAM.—The Muslim believes in the inherent sinlessness of man's nature, which, made of the goodliest fibre, is capable of unlimited progress, setting him above the angels, and leading him to the border of Divinity.

THE POSITION OF WOMAN IN ISLAM.—Man and woman come from the same essence, possess the same soul, and they have been equipped with equal capability for intellectual, spiritual and moral attainments. Islam places man and woman under the like obligations, the one to the other.

EQUALITY OF MANKIND AND THE BROTHERHOOD OF ISLAM.—Islam is the religion of the Unity of God and the equality of mankind. Lineage, riches and family honours are accidental things; virtue and the service of humanity are the matters of real merit. Distinctions of colour, race and creed are unknown in the ranks of Islam. All mankind is of one family, and Islam has succeeded in welding the black and the white into one fraternal whole.

PERSONAL JUDGMENT.—Islam encourages the exercise of personal judgment and respects difference of opinion, which, according to the sayings of the Prophet Muhammad, is a blessing of God.

KNOWLEDGE.—The pursuit of knowledge is a duty in Islam, and it is the acquisition of knowledge that makes men superior to angels.

SANCTITY OF LABOUR.—Every labour which enables man to live honestly is respected. Idleness is deemed a sin.

CHARITY.—All the faculties of man have been given to him as a trust from God, for the benefit of his fellow-creatures. It is man's duty to live for others, and his charities must be applied without any distinction of persons. Charity in Islam brings man nearer to God. Charity and the giving of alms have been made obligatory, and every person who possesses property above a certain limit has to pay a tax, levied on the rich for the benefit of the poor.

